

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed October 23, 2006 has been carefully considered.
Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Status and Amendment to the Claims

Claims 1-28 are now pending.

Claims 1-26 stand allowed. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowance of claims 1-26.

Claims 27-28 have been canceled by this amendment, without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Claims 1 and 12-14 have been amended to correct minor informalities of a clerical nature. No "new matter" has been added by the amendment.

Claim Objections

Claims 1 and 28 stand objected to for minor informalities.

Claim 1 has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion. Claim 28 has been canceled.

With this amendment, withdrawal of the objection to the claims is respectfully requested.

The 35 U.S.C. §102 Rejection

Claims 27 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being allegedly anticipated by Vallee et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,151,355).

Claims 27 and 28 have been canceled without prejudice. With this amendment, withdrawal of the rejections to the claims based on Vallee et al. is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully asserted that the claims are now in condition for allowance.


Conclusion

It is believed that this Amendment places the above-identified patent application into condition for allowance. Early favorable consideration of this Amendment is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 50-1698.

Respectfully submitted,
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